42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

A. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

868

And first as to physical education. As soon as an Isneg child is able to roam around without any assistance, the mother, who up till now rarely failed to take it along by carrying it on her back, very often makes it accompany her when she goes to the field, to the river or wherever duty calls, and from now on the little one has to walk at least for some part of the journey. When a boy grows older he mostly accompanies his father, while a girl continues to follow in the trail of her mother, or rather to precede her mother, as this is the usual way. In this manner children learn how to ascend and descend mountain slopes, how to cling to precipitous cliffs by using both fingers and toes, and how to cross rivers and brooks. Occasionally the parent tells his offspring in what crevice of the rock he should insert his great toe, but this is mostly learned by experience and practice.

Even swimming is never taught ex professo. This may perhaps be the reason why you can find in almost every agglomeration a few girls and sometimes a couple of boys who are unable to keep themselves afloat. Recently a young man from Nagilian was drowned at the confluence of the Tabayagan and the Apayaw, just below Abbil; and one of my houseboys from Bolo is not able to recover his property without assistance, if it happens to fall down into deep water at the time of washing clothes or taking a bath. In both cases the boys failed to learn how to swim, although they were born and reared on the banks of the Apayaw.

A good amount of almost daily walking is supposed to be a sufficient natural guarantee for boys and girls to grow up sturdy and healthy, as far as required by an Isneg, while the only kind of preternatural help that is resorted to in order to keep the child from sickness, is merely to attach a string with a few seeds or cowries strung on it, either around the neck or at the wrist of the babe, or to make it wear a few herbs, the secret of the shaman, somewhere on the body.

All this goes to show that there is really no recognized system of physical training: hardship is avoided as much as possible, and if anything were taught the young about it, it would be to avoid it rather than to be inured to it, if you except perhaps the sport of *bisndg*, to which I shall refer presently.

Formerly, the only bodily strength, agility and skill that were necessary to an Isneg boy,—besides those required for his daily walks

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

868 and ordinary work, to which his parents even now introduce him as early as possible,—were those he needed at the time of taking a head or of defending his own; and here again, the best means for acquiring them was practice by imitation or necessity. Even the use of the spear, the headax and the shield was never formally taught: a young man saw his elders at work, and did as they did. After all, a real attack, openly and face to face, has always been rather the exception; to fall unawares on an unsuspecting enemy, to kill a defenceless woman or child, and similar exploits, were usually much more in the line of the Isneg. If nevertheless some of them have been real braves, practice, not formal teaching, has made them such. But nowadays these happy times seem to be gone forever: every Isneg man cultivates his fields in peace and sits undisturbed under his coconut tree, the latter eventuality being usually the more frequent

857 524 Isneg boys and girls are found of play, this is only natural; but their choice is very limited. Indeed, except for the sport of *bisnág*, most of the time these types of play merely consist in running and wrestling, at least as far as active sports that may serve to develop bodily strength are concerned. A group of Isneg boys, whether inside or outside the house, rarely keep quiet for a long time, and very soon playful fighting, which for the most part consists in slapping and kicking one another, is indulged in. This romping, which the Isneg call by the comprehensive term of *maxaúrád*, after a time becomes so noisy that other people present cannot hear one another's voices, until some old fellow cries: "*Páxat*" (no special meaning), at which the infernal noise stops on the spot, to begin again, of course, at the first opportunity. Isneg girls, although usually less rough and noisy, are not loath to follow the example of the members of the ruder sex; this is generally, but not always, done among themselves exclusively.

[863] 515 Baths are taken rather frequently by both adults and children: the latter either follow the example of their elders or go to take a splash in the river with their companions. In this case each sex keeps strictly apart almost without exception: indeed an Isneg mother never fails to teach her girls a certain modesty as the best means to prevent regrettable incidents. Baths are always taken in some stream of [136] running water; ponds of still water besides being very rare in the Isneg country, are usually infested with crocodiles, and no Isneg would think of fetching water from somewhere to take his ablutions at home: his village is always situated near some river or brook, and he would consider it as the acme of absurdity to go to the stream in

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

524 865 After this the patient takes his turn in playing the rôle of agent, and all excitement, and perhaps filled with a spirit of revenge, he will try to elicit even more applause than his predecessor by the gracefulness and abundance of his contortions, and by the keenness of his final blow. Sometimes both men repeat the performance once and again, and even several times in succession; but the general rule is one slap to each individual.

All the time some of the bystanders are challenging one another to a similar combat and as soon as the two customary blows have been struck, or in case the same two men played the *bisndg* several times in succession, as soon as these are tired or otherwise stop slapping one another, the next pair takes to the platform.

B. MENTAL EDUCATION

212 868 Let us now turn to the question of mental education. Here at least we meet with a kind of formal training. To make the matter very simple, I shall begin by mentioning the fact that the Isneg have no system of writing, and there is consequently no room for teaching anything concerned with either reading or writing; and, whereas there are no recognized hereditary chiefs among them, all children are practically on the same level. But all of them have to learn the spoken language of the people, and without the help of someone to teach them, most youngsters would remain ignorant of a good many terms that every decent Isneg should know. Moreover such knowledge has to be imparted to them at the earliest opportunity.

868 855 Here the mother, without being recognized specifically as a teacher, takes upon herself to instruct her child as soon as it begins to be able to talk. She tells it the names of articles of furniture, animals, trees, and whatever comes in their way. This is done formally, but not systematically. I mean that the mother really teaches her child, but she does this only on the occasion of meeting the object whose name she wishes her baby to know. The father also does not fail to teach his boys, who have attained the age at which they leave the usual company of their mother and follow their male parent, the names of some objects of which they might still be ignorant, for instance the names of constellations, and more especially the names of places, brooks, etc., which they meet on their way while travelling. Even in the case of small children of both sexes, the father gladly plays the instructor, whenever there is some occasion to do so, although as a rule the mother is supposed to impart most of that kind of training

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

to the members of the younger generation. It is she indeed who is the most steady companion of the little ones and who naturally has the greatest influence over them; and in the case of girls, this companionship and influence continue for a comparatively long time.

C. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

With reference to vocational training, the Isneg, probably unconsciously aware of the fact that mere theoretical teaching rarely amounts to anything, have only one way of imparting knowledge in this line, namely, by showing how to do things. Nevertheless their children have two ways of getting it, by imitating what they see and by working under the direction of people who give them formal instruction. The two ways are rather sharply defined, some kinds of work being exclusively learned by imitation and practice, while others are first formally taught and shown and then practised. Before enumerating the different occupations of the Isneg, and stating whether they are practised by boys or by girls and whether they are learned by pure imitation or by formal instruction, I should like to make a few preliminary remarks.

In general it should be said that whenever there is question of formal instruction among the Isneg, a boy is taught exclusively by his father and a girl by her mother. Other persons take the place of the parents only in case of the latters' premature decease, and even then women confine their instruction to girls and men to boys. The reason of this separation of the sexes is not far to seek: every Isneg strictly keeps to the occupations commonly performed by his or her own sex, and so the children necessarily get their knowledge also from persons of their own sex. Recently I had a little conversation with an Isneg widower which very well illustrates the matter:

He: "I am a very poor man."

I: "Poor? How can you be poor when you have so much fertile soil at your disposition?"

He: "Yes, but I have no wife."

I: "Does that make any difference?" [I knew it did, of course, but I wanted to hear him tell me so].

He: "Well, certainly; I need a woman to till my fields."

I: "Now, is that a reason? Are you not healthy and strong enough to do that yourself?"

He: "How could I do that? Do you expect me to plant the seeds and grub up the weeds?"

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

462 I: "Of course, why shouldn't you:"

He: "But I never did that; I do not know anything about it."

I: "That is very easy though; and you are not too old to learn. Can you not do like this?" [Here I mimicked the action of a woman who makes holes in the ground for planting the seeds].

He: "Wouldn't that be funny. Have you ever seen a man doing a woman's work?"

I: "I do not see anything funny about it, if you need to do so in order to live."

He: "No, sir, that is not our business; that is woman's work; without a woman we can do nothing. I cannot help it, but that is the custom. Woman's work for a woman, man's work for a man."

856 It is also a fact that boys help their father and girls their mother
861 as soon as they are able to do so. No sooner have they gained the required strength but they will be given some necessary implement in order to learn its use. Very often, especially in the case of the headax [868] *(aliwá)* of men, which is of universal use and serves almost any purpose, the instrument at first will be a small or light one, provided it serves the purpose, to be superseded later on by a heavier one of the same nature. Whereas a child usually accompanies, first its mother, and later on one of its parents according to its sex, it is but natural that it should also offer them its help, as soon as it has gained sufficient strength. Although at first the help may be very slight and insignificant, the Isneg does not lose sight of the fact that this early exercise and practice will be of great benefit to the child, and that in the end it will accrue to his own advantage.

861 Imitative types of play are very little practised, as may be deduced from the above: the children very soon have to do the real thing, why should they occupy themselves with imitations? Nevertheless it may happen that they imitate in play a certain work which is still beyond their strength: so I have seen little Isneg girls playing at pounding and winnowing rice, with sand for rice, a small hole in the ground for a mortar, a stick for a pestle, and some large leaf for a winnow; [524] but these are exceptions, and not at all frequent ones. Incidentally it may be mentioned that dolls are unknown to our little Isneg maidens; a real child will be thrust upon them as soon as they are able to carry it.

462 And now as to the sundry occupations of the Isneg.

241 An Isneg is a farmer above anything else, so no wonder that agriculture is not only his chief pursuit, but also that which is taught

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

his children earlier and more extensively than any other work. At the same time he believes in the division of labor; so even in this respect, among the Isneg, the two sexes simply complement one another.

The agricultural system of the Isneg is a very wasteful one, as he never plants his rice in the same field for two consecutive years. He has to clear every year a part of the forest or bush: now this work is the exclusive duty of the men. A father tells and shows his boy which part of the forest or bush should be chosen for a future field; then both start the work by cutting down small trees and undergrowth, and finish it by burning the dried plants. The boy imitates his father during the whole procedure, but an occasional hint on the part of the parent is rarely absent, especially in the case of the smaller boys. Then comes the turn of the women, to whom from now on the whole work devolves almost exclusively. The mother teaches her girls how to plant rice, corn, taro, yams, sweet potatoes and the rest, how to weed the fields, and how to harvest the crops. The only time at which the father, with the boys as his pupils, intervenes is when a fence has to be erected around the field.

In brief, almost everything relating to agriculture is formally taught to the children, but it is done in such a way that they can immediately start practising what they have learned, by imitating their elders. The only exception is the original clearing of a chosen field, which is learned by imitation alone; at that time of course the boy should already be old enough to wield at least a small headax, and consequently he must have seen his father at work in former years, and needs no further instruction on the subject.

Pounding rice and preparing the meals are never taught: just as soon as a girl is old enough, she helps her mother, and picks these things up just naturally Even boys learn how to cook a simple meal (and all Isneg meals deserve that qualification) in the same way, as later on, especially when travelling, they will have to do it without the assistance of the women.

Hunting, fishing and preparing trees for apiculture, which are men's pursuits, are learned almost exclusively by imitation: a boy sees what others do, whether they be his older relatives or just some other boys who have already been initiated into the secrets of the game, and he acts like they do. That an occasional word of instruction or warning may be offered the young man, cannot be denied, but as a whole no formal teaching takes place.

42 Vanoverbergh E-5 (pc date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

462 The same may be said with reference to simple and ordinary car-
335 pentry, in which most all Isneg are more or less expert. Indeed
868 when there is question of building a new house, the whole agglomer-
ation is summoned to take part. Nevertheless one or more men, more skilled than the rest, usually take the lead, and others do what they are told; in the meanwhile the youngsters pick up whatever they can according to each one's capacity of understanding and skill of hand.

462 Baskets are woven by the women, while the weaving of bownets
285 falls to the share of the men. In both cases young people learn the
868 work merely by imitating what is done by their elders.

462 Perhaps the only kind of work that is performed among the Isneg
326 by special craftsmen, and not by everybody indifferently, is that of
868 the blacksmith, and here again boys learn by imitation. While still
184 small, they merely go and look, but once they have attained their tenth year or so, they help their elders and learn the profession through practice. This is the more easy, as such occupations are not monopolized by a few individuals in each agglomeration, but are professed by the whole settlement or at least by several families, in a very restricted number of places.

868 One subject in which a boy generally receives formal instruction, at least if he wants to learn it, is that of managing a boat, of handling an oar, a paddle and a pole: the father is the recognized teacher of his offspring in this respect; but the whole is of course limited almost exclusively to places that are situated along the Apayaw in its lower course. In a few other places, parents teach their children how to manage a raft, but such teaching is generally much less formal, at least when there is only question of crossing a stream or of travelling over parts of a river that are easy to pass, as most youngsters, girls not excluded, will have seen their elders at work, and will try to imitate them without the necessity of such teaching. An occasional plunge rarely does them any harm, as the majority swim like rats, and those who would not float in case of taking an involuntary bath usually do not take the risk of trying to manage any water craft without the help of others.

D. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

771 And now we come to the fields of religion and morality, which, in the case of the Isneg, seem to have each their own rather well-defined sphere, without encroaching the one upon the other, at least in so far as morality is concerned with man's duties to his fellow men. Nevertheless generalities are of little or no value, so I shall try to give as

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

lighten that of the young shaman who has to confide these things to memory. Here stops the exclusive rôle of the *dorarákit* or shaman as far as religious instruction is concerned.

Dancing and singing, whether religious or otherwise, are learned by pure imitation. Songs are improvised most of the time; the only exceptions are a few scattered terms and a limited number of sentences, more especially a kind of refrain or burden, that recurs at the end of every verse or every stanza in most Isneg songs. These traditional terms and sentences are mostly archaic, and their meaning is a mystery to at least the generality of the Isneg; perhaps some of them have never had any meaning at all.

All Isneg beliefs, whether they have to do with magic or with religion, whether they refer to the world of spirits or to the state of a person after death, are simply picked up, or, as the Isneg put it, "they hear them (*maxi-náda da*)." This means that there is no formal instruction about the matter. Aged persons, particularly old women, and still more especially shamans, freely talk about these things at the slightest provocation, and youngsters are always eager to listen to them. This, however, does not exclude the possibility and even the probability of the members of the older generation talking about magical or religious beliefs purposely and with the direct intention of telling the children about them. And that such instruction, whether intended or not, is sometimes really very efficacious is proved by the fact that I have had among my informants girls of barely ten years old who know everything about certain spirits and could vividly describe them to me. This is the more easily understood when one remembers that all these extraordinary details agree very well with the usual trend of the Isneg mind toward the supernatural, so that the children experience little difficulty in keeping them impressed upon their memory.

Myths and legends, stories and tales, which by the way are sometimes far from being religious, are mostly related by the parents and grandparents in the evening, when the whole family is stretched out on the floor and ready to sleep. The Isneg are not in the habit of making much use of artificial light, and they very often go to sleep almost at sunset, so that there is usually ample time for the old people to comply with the wishes of the youngsters, who among them as well as among us, are always eager to hear a story, and the more fantastic the story, the better. Even young boys and girls are sometimes invited to play the rôle of story-teller, provided they are known

252 412 [415] then hulls it by pounding it with a wooden pestle in a mortar fashioned of a two-foot section of a hardwood log, set on end and hollowed out. The woman then winnows it by cleverly tossing it in an oval-shaped tray woven of rattan. There will often be a set of these mortars with the women companionably pounding together, using a sort of chant.

593 854 [842] The relatives are affectionate, and family ties are strong all through life. The family life is a happy one. Babies are much desired and receive a great deal of loving care. Their wants are promptly supplied, and no little one cries its heart out for lack 524 857 of a mother's loving arms. The small girls do not have dolls to play with but use the babies instead. Also, instead of little play houses, they early begin to play house by helping their mothers in the big houses. Many of the small chores about the house are done by the children. But they also have plenty of time for games. [868] swimming, and other amusements. As they grow older, the girls, of course, follow the work of the mother: housework, washing, taking care of the pigs and chickens, carrying water in jars on their heads from the spring, farming, and other duties. The boys cheerfully work with their fathers in gathering wood, building houses, granaries, chicken coops, bamboo fences, etc., and in fishing and hunting. They early learn the lore of the woods; so that a boy of seven here can take much better care of himself in the open than the average Eagle Boy Scout in the United States. [861] The children are taught a proper decorum; but corporal punishment is rare. A little scolding usually keeps them in order.